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[1](#)E. KINGSTON 56 (NOTAL)
[1](#)F. STATE 204184 (NOTAL)

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission James T. Heg

Summary

1.(C) The APIS (Advanced Passenger Information System) will be successfully implemented, according to Minister of National Security Peter Phillips; the Government of Jamaica (GoJ) will, following review by the Cabinet, introduce the necessary legislation on the House floor in late-January or early-February, enact it, and have the system fully operational prior to the start of the Cricket World Cup (CWC) series in March. Phillips offered these reassurances to Charge' in a private meeting of January 12; he also shared views on the following vital security-related areas of concern:

- Risk of violence in the run-up to national elections (which must be held by the end of this year);
- Crime, corruption, and recent killings of police;
- The thriving "ganja-for guns" trade between Haiti/Central America and Jamaica;
- Status of proposed SOFA (Status of Forces Agreement);
- Iraq
- CITIA (Convention on International Trafficking in Arms).

End Summary.

2.(SBU) In a private meeting on January 12, Jamaican Minister of National Security Peter Phillips, accompanied by Permanent Secretary Gilbert Scott and Special Advisor to the Chairman of the CARICOM Ministerial Subcommittee on Resource Mobilization for Crime and Security O'Neil Hamilton, shared views with Charge' and accompanying Emboffs on a wide range of security and law enforcement-related issues.

3.(SBU) In response to an inquiry by Charge', Phillips expressed complete confidence that implementation of APIS would be successful. The GoJ (Government of Jamaica) had just received CARICOM's draft of the required legislation; "our own people" now were preparing Jamaica's version. The next step is required review by the Jamaican Cabinet. The GoJ hoped to introduce the legislation on the House floor in late-January or early-February, enact it, and have the system fully operational prior to the start of the Cricket World Cup (CWC) series in March. Charge' urged Phillips to attempt to accelerate this process, if feasible. Phillips said there was "no resistance" to the legislation; everyone understood that it needed to be in place because the airlines wanted the legal protection it afforded. Hamilton noted that Barbados and Trinidad & Tobago had had to "go back to the drawing board" to "revisit portions of the legislation dealing with third parties and information exchange."

Law Enforcement & Security -----

4.(SBU) Charge' then raised several security- and law enforcement-related areas of concern. With respect to the recent series of violent deaths of police officers, Phillips pointed out that in 2006 Jamaica had seen some improvement in the crime statistics: a 20 percent drop in murders and 30 percent decline overall in serious crimes. But in late-2006 and early-2007, there had been an "alarming" upsurge of crime in the west of the country, particularly in St. James (where Montego Bay is located)

and Westmoreland parishes. To date in 2007, crime actually was down in the corporate Kingston area; conversely, the situation to the West was "frightening." In his view, four factors were behind this:

(a) New law enforcement techniques and approaches such as the major crimes investigative team had increased the pressure on criminal elements in Kingston, who therefore had moved on to other areas of the country.

(b) These new techniques and strategies had not yet been introduced in the outlying districts.

(c) The emergence and consolidation of the "ganja-for-guns" trade between Jamaica and Haiti/Central America was fueling crime. During his recent state visit to Kingston, Haitian President Rene Preval had discussed this disturbing trend with GoJ officials. The Jamaican Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade (MFAFT) was planning to open a diplomatic Mission in Haiti, and a GoJ law enforcement team soon would visit Haiti in an effort to bolster bilateral cooperation in combating the "ganja for guns" trade.

(d) As law enforcement pressure on the illegal cocaine trade had grown in the West of the country, new criminal activities had emerged, e.g., IT-based lottery scams. Many of the victims of such scams (most of whom were in the U.S.) were reluctant to give evidence or even to admit involvement; therefore, Jamaican authorities often had to prosecute the perpetrators for lesser offenses such as unlawful possession or intent. Jamaica already had seen thirteen murders related to IT crimes.

Corruption, Killings of Police -----

5.(C) Phillips then acknowledged that corruption among the Jamaican Constabulary Force (JCF) was "weakening" efforts to control crime: any gains would be "unsustainable" unless we can tackle corruption." The JCF was still trying to recruit an IPO (International Police Officer) to lead the struggle against corruption. He suspected that the failure

to date to recruit an IPO had stemmed from "the reticence of senior elements of the JCF to tackle corruption." The JCF was now on its third effort to recruit an IPO. Previously, when candidates for the position had been interviewed by senior JCF members, they had not been encouraged. It was imperative that the JCF "clean up the show." Of the two police killed so far this year, one was suspected to have been corrupt and to have been murdered by his criminal associates; the other case showed no indication that the officer had been involved in corrupt activities. However, he did not see a "centrally coordinated effort to attack the police"; instead, the recent killings had been the work of "isolated criminals."

Violence in Run-up to National Elections?

6.(C) When Charge' inquired regarding Police Commissioner Lucius Thomas's recent public predictions of violence in the run-up to national elections (which must be held by the end of the year), Phillips observed with understated objectivity that, historically, elections in Jamaica "do not create a propitious environment for law enforcement." In 2002, it had taken a "sustained intervention to maintain the peace" by then-Prime Minister P.J. Patterson and Opposition Leader Edward Seaga, with help from the U.S., U.K., and Canada. This time, the same "restraints" may not be in place: both the current Prime Minister and Opposition Leader were new, and this made the contest something of a "zero-sum game." The intensity of the competition would be great. "Cascading through their party organizations" were "elements of criminality apt to become involved in the elections." Such elements were active on both sides, and on both sides the "willingness to restrain

them" was not as great as it should be; yet, there was "still scope for dialogue as in 2002." As for recent reports of "stockpiling of weapons ahead of the elections," he was "not sure"; however, he was confident that criminal elements with affiliations to both parties were "actively involved in acquisitions" of weapons. The illegal trade in firearms had become "big business." He was aware of only one case of smugglers who apparently would sell firearms to only one side of the political spectrum; however, there could be others. He noted that a rifle purchased for 100USD in Central America would fetch about 2,000USD on the Jamaican market. In response to Emboff's inquiry as to whether the level of stockpiling was worse than during the run-up to elections in 2002, Phillips said he was uncertain: possibly, the GoJQs intelligence was better, rather than the flow of weapons greater.

7.(C) Phillips then commented on the ready availability of weapons from Haiti and Central America (particularly Honduras): cheap rifles were plentiful. Corruption by senior-level officials was particularly difficult to prosecute; because of the sophistication and social influence of these officials, ordinary police often were reluctant to investigate or accuse high-level officials. Phillips said he hoped to establish an investigative authority independent of the JCF to "tackle serious public corruption and organized crime." As in economics, monopolies were a bad thing in law enforcement: "corruption thrives where police have a monopoly, and the JCF currently is a monopoly." Phillips then said he would welcome an enhancement of four-way discussions and coordination of security and law enforcement matters among the GoJ, U.S., U.K., and Canada. Phillips indicated that one way to attack the "ganja-for-guns" trade would be to "ratchet-up" Operation Buccaneer. He noted that Chinook helicopters were too big and powerful for a densely populated small country like Jamaica; they easily could do damage to buildings and farms.

SOFA (Status of Forces Agreement)

7.(SBU) Charge' then noted that the MFAFT had told the Embassy the GoJ would get back to us in late-January or early-February regarding the proposed long-term SOFA (Reftel C). Phillips acknowledged the "danger of bureaucratic inertia." The Ministry of National Security had given its views/input to the GoJ's review of the proposed SOFA, and would follow-up.

Iraq

18. (SBU) Charge' then provided a supplemental copy of the background on the President's new Iraq strategy (Reftels D,E). Phillips expressed appreciation, then noted that the conflict in Iraq was draining U.S. resources, and said he hoped this imbalance could be redressed soon. As he had pointed out in his recent meeting with Assistant Secretary Shannon, a key question was "the extent we can pry funding from the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), World Bank, and USAID to support serious law enforcement reform efforts." In the 1960s and 70s, many donors had pulled back support for police forces in Latin America and the Caribbean; now, events in Colombia had led many to re-think. The JCF needed a new Command and Control facility, training facilities, and equipment and training employing modern technologies, e.g., DNA, forensics. He hoped to accelerate the pace of modernization of the JCF; a demoralized force was a "prime candidate for corruption." ((Comment: according to a Bill Johnson opinion poll taken Jan. 5-6 and featured in the Jan. 14 "Sunday Gleaner", most Jamaicans believe that fully half of the JCF is corrupt--end comment.))

CITIA (Convention on International Trafficking in Arms)

9.(SBU) In response to Emboff's inquiry regarding a CARICOM statement in support of CITIA, Phillips said a draft statement was in circulation among CARICOM members. He then said the GoJ hoped CARICOM would issue a statement at the ministerial-level meeting to be held the week of Jan. 15 in Trinidad.

Comment

10.(C) Always a serious and focused interlocutor, Phillips at this meeting appeared unusually worried and burdened by recent events and trends. The political environment in which he works is clearly not easy, even apart from his position as failed challenger to Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller as Leader of the PNP (People's National Party) and successor to P.J. Patterson. The number of senior GoJ officials in whom Phillips has full confidence appears to be shrinking.
End Comment.

11.(U) The 2006/2007 objectives for the Majors List Report (Ref F) also were discussed during this meeting, and will be reported septel.

JOHNSON